

THE ARABESQUE DATABASE

Introduction

The ARABESQUE database contains all the data collected during the ARABESQUE field programme except for the underway and Undulating Oceanographic Recorder (UOR) data sets. This is a large and complex data set which inevitably leads to some complexity in the structure of the database. However, tools have been provided to ease the task of getting what you need from the database.

The database is presented on the CD-ROM in both ASCII 'kit form' and as a complete implementation in Microsoft JET 2.5 format. The latter is fully compatible with Microsoft Access 2.0 and may be used with later versions of Access providing there is no requirement to change the structure of any of the database objects. The data may also be read by many other packages, either directly or through Open Database Connectivity (ODBC) interfaces.

This document is designed to lead you to the data you require in the database. We will therefore start by telling you what is there in terms of types of data stored, followed by a description of the tools you may use to obtain the data. The information is presented in the following series of documents.

Database Contents

This provides an overview of the types of data held within the database and should be the starting point for any user of the database.

Database Data Documentation

Extensive documentation has been compiled on the protocols used in the collection of the ARABESQUE data set together with issues of data quality. This information is vital. The quality of the ARABESQUE data is variable and the protocols used by the different partners vary significantly. The burden of deciding whether the data you extract is 'fit for purpose' for your application is placed on you, the user. Ignore this documentation at your peril.

Structure of the Database

The database is relational and therefore consists of a series of tables. Documentation is provided that summarises what is held in each table, defines the table fields and specifies the relationships between the tables.

Using the BODC Database Explorer

The BODC Database Explorer is a Windows95 application that provides easy access to the database contents. Documentation is provided on what this program can do and how to use it.

Using Microsoft Access to Explore the Database

A copy of the database is included in Microsoft JET 2.5 format. This document explains how users who have a copy of Access available may use this package to interrogate the database.

Using the 'Kit Form' Database

The 'kit form' database concept has been a feature of project data sets electronically published on CD-ROM by BODC. Essentially, it is a relational database dumped as a set of flat ASCII files, including all the key fields that link the tables together. The 'kit form' database is designed to accommodate those users who wish to import all or part of the database into their own relational database management system.